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STUDY OF MILITARY SCIENCE BY OUR UNIVERSITY STUDENTS -

by

GENERAL K.M.CARIAPPA (Retd.)

I have been giving some thought for sometime to the study of Military Science by students in our Universities. Having discussed this matter with some educational authorities, and having seen some of the question papers set on this subject, I cannot help feeling that we are not quite on the right track in this matter. The present syllabus covers an area of Military subjects which, as I see it, is beyond the province of a college student. Study of Military strategy and Military minor tactics are in the syllabus which are not really necessary. Frankly, I do feel that this method of educating our young men in this subject of national importance is not quite what it ought to be.

2. This subject should be treated on a much wider basis. There should be no question of students who take military science as one of their subjects being regarded as 'experts' on military 'tactics' and 'strategy'. They should be taught this subject to give them an idea on military matters, whilst they are students so that later in life as 'full-fledged' citizens, they would know of the part they should play in regard to the Defence of our land. It should give them the broad principles which are intimately concerned with the defence of the country.

3. The strength of a country is not measured only in terms of its armed might. To me, the armed might comes fifth in the list of essential factors which provide this strength. The first four factors are:

a) a people with a high morale;
b) economic stability;
c) industrial self-sufficiency as far as possible, and
d) a virile people.

and then, only then, will the Armed Forces be of any real sustained value to the country. It is no good just having an Army, Navy and Air Force officered and manned by the best young men of the country, equipped, trained and organised on the most modern lines, unless we have these 'first four' as essential pre-requisites. Unless we have them, when the standing Army has taken the first 'bump' on contact with the enemy, and has suffered casualities, the maintenance of the momentum of military operations cannot be kept up properly, unless behind the standing army the nation can provide these very essential factors. Incidentally, wars of tomorrow will not be 'fought' on the battlefields alone. The destructions and devastations will be more pronounced in the industrial areas - far behind the 'battlefields'. The civil population may suffer more than the fighting men in the front lines from air attacks.

4. It is, therefore, very necessary that every young man of our country must have the knowledge of these five factors which provide the strengthfor the defence of the country. He must be taught to give a serious thought to on how he, when he grows up, can contribute his service to obtain these factors.

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5. The strength, the organisation, the training and the equipment of the Defence Forces of a country are very intimately related to the foreign policy of the Government of one's country and its internal situation. If the foreign policy is such that our Armed Forces have to be prepared to fight wars in 'Mars' the strength, the organisation, the training and equipment will be so decided as to enable them to fight in 'Mars'. If, on the other hand the policy is that the country is only interested with Military operations in alliance with certain neighbouring countries, the strength, the organisation, etc., will naturally be so regulated to meet these demands. If the policy is one of the non-alignment with any power bloc or blocs, as our policy is, the strength, organisation, training and equipment naturally are planned according to our country's needs. For this purpose, the young men must give a serious thought to, during their collegiate days, as to how such an Armed Force can be kept up to a high pitch of training with good backing up from the civil side at all times. Incidentally, in the last war, for everyone fighting man in the firing line, about 40 people were required behind him to keep him going, in the firing line. It is, therefore, necessary for the young students to know who these '40' people were, and how they can be kept up to scratch at all times. In the present day of 'Scientific Warfare' many experts will be required behind the firing line.

6. How can the economy of the country with regard to food production, manufacture of goods, peace-time requirements of the Armed Forces their man-power, and so on, be related to the needs of both the civil population and the armed forces? How can the machinery for the production of the needs of the civil population in peace time be converted to meet the demands of the Armed Forces in war time, and, when war is over, how can the machinery which was set up during the state of emergency to meet the needs of the Armed Forces, be converted to produce the needs of the civil population?

Students should know how we can build up the three essential factors in our people to produce the man-power of the right type that is required in war time?

a) physical fitness;
b) mental alertness; and
c) moral correctness.

What should be the method of bringing up of the youth of our country to be the men of the above type? How can the machinery for making motor vehicles like buses, trucks, lorries, cars, tractors, etc. which are to be made in one's country in peace time, be converted for producing similar vehicles to meet the demands of the Armed Forces in war time. Can there be a common denominator' for peace and war - thus saving in labour, material and money?

7. No country can be self-sufficient in all its requirements for its Armed Forces. There has got to be reliance on foreign supplies of some commodities that may be required for them. So, the students should know where such commodities come from and how. What should be done in peace time between the governments of the countries, between the traders of the countries, and so on, to ensure of an even flow of such commodities to one's country in war time.

...3.

8. 'Sputniks' - 'Inter-Continental Ballistic Missiles' - 'Supersonic Aircraft' - 'Spacemen' - are today the 'talk of the town'. We have got to be fully knowledgeable of their potentialities as war weapons. Civil defence in a nuclear war should be a subject of serious study. The study of the effects of 'nuclear warfare', 'Biological warfare' on the people, present and the future must be given high priority. Study of military geography, Philosophy of Wars, psychological warfare are subjects which need studying generally.

9. The students should study 'broadly' some past 'wars' and 'campaigns' to learn from the mistakes made in the past - in the art of directing wars by statesmen and conducting them by soldiers. They must be taught how 'Statesmen' and 'Soldiers' and 'Industrialists' should work together when dealing with defence problems of the country, both in peace and in war.

10. These are some of the many matters which do require a very serious study by our young generation who are the leaders of tomorrow. So, I feel that the syllabus for 'Military Science' must be based on the points I have stated. This short note covers the subject only in general terms. This is intended to give some idea - a very general idea - on how this matter should be tackled. I do hope this note will give higher authority some food for thought and will form a kind of 'frame-work' for a Special Committee which I recommend might be set up, to draw up a 'directive' on this subject.

'ROSHANARA'
MERCARA
COORG

Note: This article has appeared in the press off and on in the last 2 years. I have had two broadcasts of this - over the A.I.R.